DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 191 SO 026 522

TITLE	Art & Interdisciplinary Studies Institute Summer 1994: Teacher Training Program Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock. Museum School.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	25p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Arkansas Arts Center Museum School, Art and Interdisciplinary Studies Institute, MacArthur Park, 9th and Commerce, PO Box 2137, Little Rock, AR 72203-2137.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Art Education; Elementary Secondary Education; Inservice Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Museums; Professional Training; Teacher Education; *Visual Arts

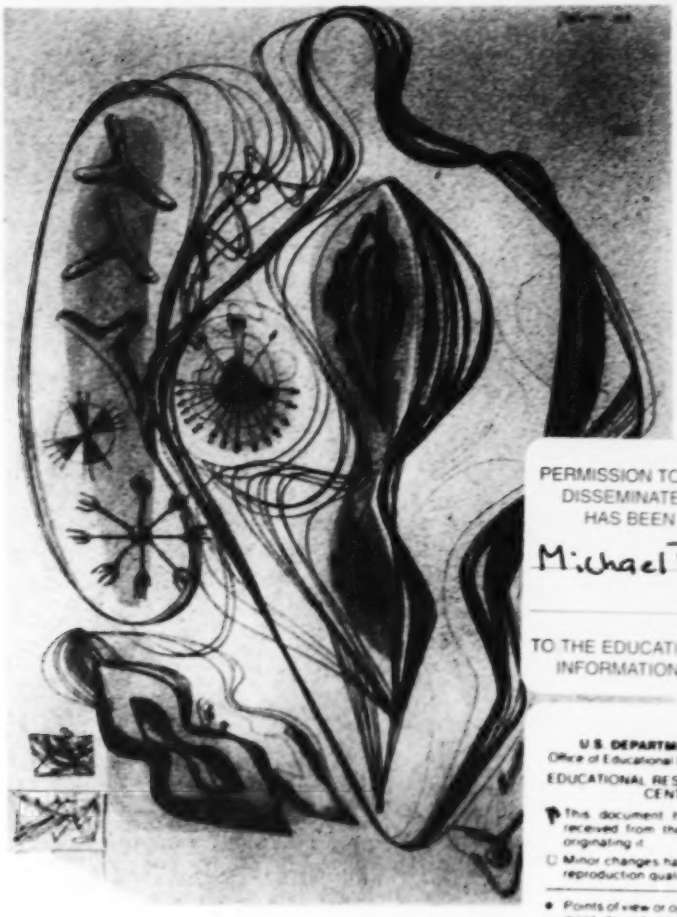
ABSTRACT

This report describes the impetus, accomplishments, and observed results of The Studio Project, which was conceived and implemented by the Arkansas Arts Center Museum School. This project was to help children become more aware of themselves and their environment, with an emphasis on the social, economic, and racial issues that confronted them, while providing exposure to art materials and techniques. The program was designed around four basic ideas and had to be: (1) appropriate for students in grades 4 through 12, for any regional, social, or economic demographics; (2) applicable to any classroom and any subject matter or discipline; (3) able to be taught by any interested teacher (art or non-art); and (4) related to classroom themes and current learning experiences. Participating teachers tested this project in the classroom, using a museum exhibition as a primary resource in a rigorous investigation of U.S. culture and society from 1930 to 1960. With art as the starting point, teachers provided students with practical hands-on involvement with two-dimensional and three-dimensional art processes appropriate to the period, and moved from the studio to art history to cultural criticism of the period, through scientific and political issues that impacted society. The report includes lesson plans produced by the project. (DQE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 403 191

Art &
Interdisciplinary Studies Institute
Summer 1994



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael Preble

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SO 026 522

Teacher Training Program
Final Report

The Arkansas Arts Center Museum School
Little Rock, Arkansas

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Summer Institute: Its Origins and An Overview

The NEW YORK TIMES *Week in Review* section last year ran two editorials which, in their juxtaposition, made clear the interdisciplinary nature of our society and culture.

On one side of the front page, the editorial, entitled *Running On Empty - Where Did All The Issues Go?*, discussed the lack of substance in the then current political campaign. It considered that the "issues script", always changing, "has been reduced to mere scribbles in the margins of the real play book where politicians are left to talk about themselves."

Richard L. Berke, "Running on Empty - Where Did All The Issues Go?", The New York Times, Sunday, October 23, 1994, Section 4, page 1.

On the other side, an editorial called *The Jabberwocky of Art Criticism*, noted the obfuscation and irrelevance stemming from contemporary art's obsession with itself. According to the editorial, this point of reference has produced an "abstracted vocabulary and obscure frames of reference...." Concurring, a gallery director noted, "What does it say about art that it's become so self-referential in a time that's more multi-cultural, more discursive than ever before?" Such equivocating and fuzziness, the editorial suggests, "leaves the casual reader clueless; the serious reader uncertain..." of the writer's meaning.

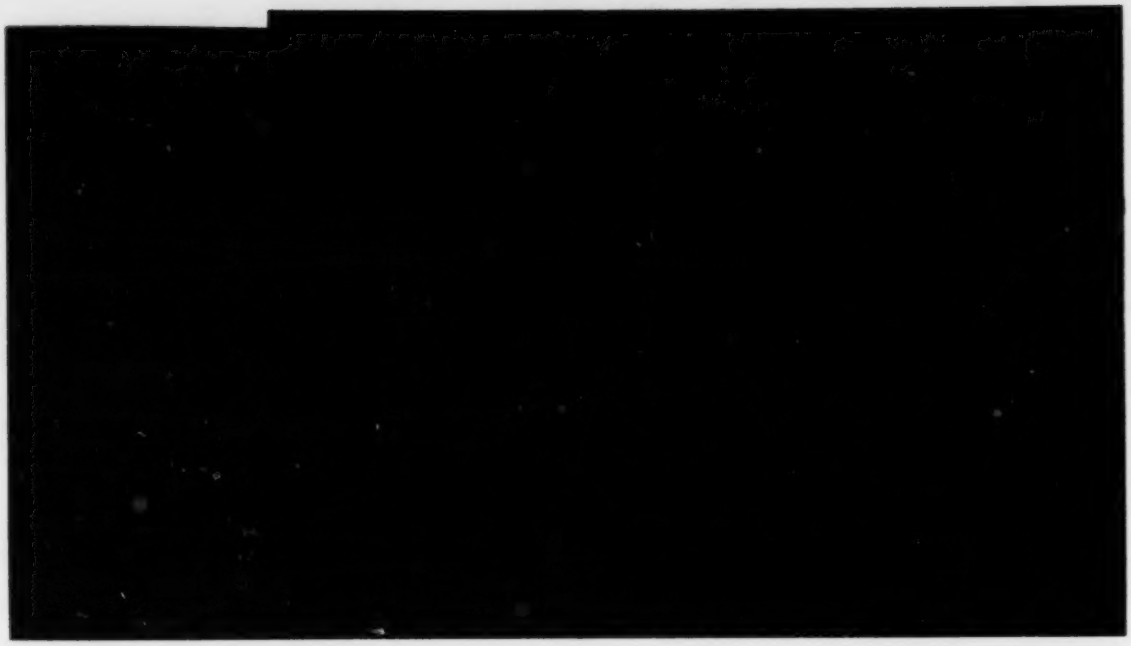
Diana Jean Schemo, "The Jabberwocky of Art Criticism", The New York Times, Sunday, October 23, 1994, Section 4, page 1.

In the articles the villain is either the politician or the arts. One curator is quoted: "Mediocre art makes for tepid criticism." Substitute politician for art and you get the gist; rather than come to grips with the society or the culture, blame the product.

We can make two observations. One is that the discourse defining politics and society goes hand in hand with the discourse that defines culture and art. (It is affected by the same currents that make the discourse more or less problematic.) The second is that confronted with a society "more multi-cultural, more discursive than ever before", blaming and addressing the product (grades, drop out, etc.) will never positively affect the problem. The problem is how to integrate this multi-cultural, discursive context into an effective learning environment and improve the quality of the social, political, and cultural discourse and the products of that discourse.

Creating an effective learning environment that integrates a multi-cultural and discursive context with content matter and technique has been a concern of the Museum School since 1990 when it completely revamped its programming. At that time, the school had reached a critical point in its studio education methods for children. Process was certainly stressed over

Cover: *Dorothy Dehner*, Study for "Invocation I", *1948, ink and gouache on paper, 13.25"x17.75", The Arkansas Arts Center Foundation.*



Louise Nevelson, Tide Garden IV, painted wood, The Arkansas Arts Center Foundation

product, but the school felt that it was not challenging the student to employ art materials and ideas to communicate in ways radical to art education, but more in line with the ways and means students communicate with each other every day. It also was apparent that motivation based only on techniques (*i.e.*, foundation problems based on line, form, shape, and color) was becoming more and more irrelevant to the students who lived in a far more visually and aurally stimulating environment.

The Studio Project

As a result, the Museum School proposed to the Jonsson Foundation, Dallas, TX, an ambitious studio project to help children become more aware of their environment with an emphasis on the social, economic, and racial issues confronting them. Such a project had to stress awareness of students, their feelings, thoughts, and emotions and, most importantly, their individual environment. It had to make exposure to materials and techniques a natural result of the project's motivation.

From the beginning, we designed this program around four basic ideas. The project had to be:

- Appropriate for children and youth in grades 4 through 12, for any regional, social, or economic demographics.
- Applicable to any classroom and any subject matter or discipline.
- Able to be taught by any interested teacher (art or non-art).
- Related to classroom themes and current learning experiences.

Louise Nevelson's work, *Tide Garden IV*, 1964, a sculpture in The Arkansas Arts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Center's permanent collection, was chosen as an appropriate motivational focus for our project. The artist used found wooden elements which she recycled and organized within box-like containers. Nevelson's sculpture inspired us to create a project in which individual students fabricated and organized the contents of a box, and then worked with a group to assemble the boxes into a cohesive whole. In placing the containers together a kind of dialogue was created. As we investigated an individual's work, that box began to refer to another's contents, or was revealed or obscured by another. Science, history, literature, social studies, current events, and more personal issues such as teen pregnancy, drugs and gangs were sources for themes that created a focus for box activity.

Over 750 students and administrators were involved in the testing of this project. The findings suggested a new and powerful method of teaching not only art but also other academic disciplines. The students' sophisticated use of materials and visual ideas suggested vast opportunities for enhancing non-visual disciplines. The quality of the dialogue between students and teachers suggested that visual representation of ideas and issues expands communication and pushes the students to think in ways different from what is achieved through recitation. This visualization can, in fact, make non-visual information more accessible, and it can certainly make it more immediate. The added advantage is that students see their ideas as equal to others'; the stacking of the boxes insures that each students' work has its own place in the sculptural "dialogue", and that together they make a powerful statement about the interconnectedness and interdependence of the group. Connecting the students to their environment (lived or imagined through media) lets the teacher focus on ideas and the excitement of learning rather than on the more routine and monotonous aspects of question/response learning.

This interaction with the environment and with the subject matter is what we hope the student would get from school. It is not the teaching of skills or dates or tables that draws teachers to education. The teacher's gratification lies in seeing a student make a connection with the subject, becoming fluent with ideas.

Through the studio project we developed an educational method similar to the way the modern artist emphasizes problem solving; *i.e.*, the adaptation of techniques and materials to the creative development of ideas. Rather than inhibit the learning process, this project mimicked the way students come to deal with the environment in which they live, the studies they learn, and the kind and type of dialogue that engages them. Art serves as a catalyst for learning across the disciplines and encourages a clear and invigorating dialogue among students and teachers.

Theodore Roszak, Studies for "Monument to an Unknown Political Prisoner" and "Reynolds Memorial", *ca. 1952, ink and wash, 12.5"x10". Collection of Estate of Theodore Roszak.*

The Institute

Thanks to the lessons learned and results achieved in the 1991 studio project, the school conceived The Art & Interdisciplinary Institute that took place during the summer of 1994 as an aggressive approach to developing and invigorating the classroom by using art as a starting point. Using the exhibition, *Between Transcendence and Brutality: American Sculptural Drawings From the 1940s and 1950s*, as a primary resource, the Institute was designed to engage participants in a rigorous investigation of American culture and society from 1930 to 1960; to provide practical hands-on involvement with 2-D and 3-D art processes appropriate to the period; to explore the interdisciplinary possibilities of using art as a focus for curriculum; to produce lesson plans for the classroom; and to publish the findings to a statewide audience.

Twenty-six teachers, (representing Northside High School, Fort Smith; North Little Rock School District; Ashdown School District; Batesville High School, McCrory School District; Conway Public School District; Pulaski County Special School District; Anthony School, St. Edward's, Pulaski Academy, and The Arkansas Arts Center Museum School), 92 community participants, and 13 scholars and artists were engaged in an extensive and demanding 52 hours of lectures, workshops, and demonstrations.

Institute Focus

The Institute utilized as a vehicle, one of the most extraordinary periods in American history, 1930-1960. This period, marked by a radical change in the political, social, economic, and cultural discourse, today continues to influence our relationship with politics, society, and culture. This change in discourse is obvious when one looks at the optimistic

The Museum School wishes to thank the Jonsson Foundation, Dallas, Texas, for its generous support of the Institute.

The school also wishes to thank the Joseph Campbell Foundation and Robert Walter for donating his services, ideas, and insights to ensure the success of the Institute.

and ideologically-based works of Benton, Davis, and Shahn created during the 1930s and the visual response of popular culture to the war years that is obvious when we compare these works to those of artists working during the 1940s and 50s. It is precisely the obviousness and insightfulness of the art works of this period that helped start the teachers' investigation and focused their efforts toward understanding this period.

Dehner, Bourgeois, Roszak, and other artists featured in the exhibition *Between Transcendence and Brutality*, and illustrated throughout the lectures of the Institute, make the historical upheavals of the times tangible. They chronicled the world malaise from economic collapse and the loss of confidence in progress, to world conflict and the horror of the war, to the melancholy and the dark side of the economic and social adjustments of the 1950s.

Artists of this period dealt with myths. Social and historic myths of the American Scene or Social Realists were used by artists employed by the government, the military, or popular media, to galvanize and motivate the masses for the war effort just as the primordial myths were used by the Abstract Expressionist after the war. It is in confronting these tangible objects (holding them in our hands) that participants began to ask questions that link the myths together. Why, in just thirty years, are the figures depicted in such different and radical ways (realistically and symbolically conceived to totemic and heroic)? The figures inhabit an environment that was once energized with activity and thirty years later is desolate and petrified. What caused this change in the relationship of figure to landscape? What were the historical events that caused these seismic changes in style and sensibility? And, finally, in looking at the space that surrounds and permeates the pictures, what were the prevailing ideas that influenced these artists?

The Institute was organized from questions about the figure, the landscape, history, and space. Teachers began with the art itself and moved from the studio to the art history and cultural criticism of the period; to the profound influence of the ideas of Joseph Campbell for the artists and intellectuals, and Will Rodgers in the political and popular culture of the time; to the scientific developments and the psychological effects of The Bomb. At the end, having surveyed this period, participants explored an overview of the 30 years and its impact on modern society and culture. To make physical and immediate the cultural, historical, and societal issues, the participants periodically returned to the studio to experience and synthesize the themes and issues confronting the artists and to reflect on these issues as a teacher in a classroom situation.

The Program

Dr. Douglas Dreishpoon, Curator of Contemporary Art, Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, Florida, and Author of exhibition catalogue, Between Transcendence And Brutality, *1994*

Dr. C. Fred Williams, Professor of History, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and Author, Arkansas: An Illustrated History of the Land of Opportunity, *1986*

Dr. Stephen Polcari, New York Director, The Archives of American Art, New York City, and Author, Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience, *Cambridge University Press, 1991*

Robert Walter, Director, the Joseph Campbell Foundation and Executive Editor, The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell *and* Historical Atlas of World Mythology, *1988*

Dr. Lary May, Chair, American Studies and Associate Professor of American Studies and History, University of Minnesota, and Editor and Contributor, Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War, *University of Chicago Press, 1989*

Dr. Everett Mendelsohn, Professor of the History of Science, Harvard University, and Founder and Editor, Journal of the History of Biology *and Joint Editor and Author,* Technology, Pessimism, and Postmodernism, 1993

Harvey Rishikof, Administrative Assistant to Chief Justice Reinquist, U.S. Supreme Court and Author, "Restructuring the Federal Courts", Mississippi Law Review, April, 1994.

Dr. George Szekely, Professor of Art Education, University of Kentucky, Lexington, and Author, "Visual Arts Areas of Study: Integration With Other Subjects", 1993

The Institute was organized with twenty-six teachers enrolled, by themselves or in teams, to listen to scholarly lectures addressing broad issues in studio art, culture, philosophy, politics, and science, and to use these broad disciplines as a focus for the daily theme which was carried through the morning lectures, studio workshops, and afternoon sessions. The anticipated product of the Institute was to teach participants how to develop an interdisciplinary lesson plan with art as an important starting point.

The teachers began on Monday, with Dr. Dreishpoon leading a walk-through of the exhibition *Between Transcendence and Brutality: American Sculptural Drawings from the 1940s and 1950s,* to acquaint the participants with the artists and their work.

The institute continued that morning with a workshop on Surrealist art techniques (which gave participants a technical and thematic familiarity with the art) and concentrated on creating dream-like landscapes (with the incongruities of object and space) and a version of the Exquisite Cadaver (a process of using found sentence or word fragments or images connected to each other in a serendipitous manner without regard to context or content) to produce striking and bizarre self-portraits. As an influence, Surrealists such as Ernst and Matta, were crucial in experimenting with automatic techniques to create a visual equivalent of the subconscious. The Americans used these processes to investigate creation and heroic myths and through them created a unique and powerful visual language.

Arkansas history of the 1930s to 1960 was the topic of the lecture presented by Dr. Williams. This lecture provided participants with the main events in the political and economic life of Arkansas and, in so doing, linked the socio-cultural timeline of Arkansas (from floods, economic bust, and political corruption to the integration of Central High) to that of American culture and society as a whole.

Dr. Dreishpoon continued his review of the main themes and issues occupying the creative energies of the exhibited artists with an in depth look at the personal histories of those artists. In the afternoon workshop, participants were introduced to the lesson plan format (see lessons section) and an introductory lecture on the seminal work of Joseph Campbell by his editor, Mr. Walter.

On Tuesday morning the lecture by Dr. Polcari focused on

artistic practice during the depression and war years by identifying the main visual approaches and formats taken by artists (documentary realism, posters/propaganda, iconoclastic, or abstract).

This was followed by a workshop that explored the automatic drip and pour techniques of Jackson Pollock. Coming to understand this most difficult Abstract Expressionist work gave the participants an understanding of the technical innovations and conceptual depth made by other Abstract Expressionist artists - artists who felt that realist techniques were inadequate to express the inexpressible horrors of war and the prevailing sense of desperation and doom.

Dr. Polcari continued, during his lecture, to review the cultural and historical themes of this era through the dances of Martha Graham.

The afternoon session was spent working as a group on the major themes and events of the three decades under study and to identify common interests and knowledge gaps.

Wednesday consisted of morning and lunch lectures by Mr. Walter on Joseph Campbell, entitled *Heroic Visions: East and West*. Campbell's book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, gave the Abstract Expressionists and other artists and intellectuals of the period a language of ritual and cosmogenic cycle, and in the adventures and body of the hero, an historic, psychic, and mythic allegory of natural process and artistic endeavor. The morning lectures, then, explored these cycles and the mythic hero.

The mythic adventure and the hero is reborn in the comics of the period. A special lecture by Mr. Bill Jones, an attorney and free-lance writer, charted the history of Classics Illustrated, Marvel Comics, and Shock SuspenStories and provided teachers with a look at typical illustrations and themes of the 40s and 50s. The sometimes humorous relationship between the masterpieces of literature (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame, War of the Worlds, The Odyssey*, etc.) and the comic versions was explored.

As a striking break from the mythic and comic universe, the morning workshop focused on creating a social realist mural (circa 1930-1940) whose subject matter was developed by the participants from collaged newspaper images. Participants were divided into "union workers" and "capitalists" and selected a collage image appropriate to their character. In turn, participants contributed their images to the mural design by talking about the character they selected. Placement of the image was based upon the ideas of Thomas Hart Benton's mechanics of form organization (equilibrium, sequence, and rhythm) and introduced the participants to the most influential artist of 1930's American Scene.

The afternoon lesson plan workshop was conducted by Mr. Walter. He designed a group activity which created a method of combining disparate activities, created by different teachers, into one over-arching lesson plan.

Each participant was given a set of hexagonal cards and assigned to a team. Each teacher responded to a series of questions about the 30s through the 50s by writing their responses on a sheet of paper and then translating those written responses into symbols that they drew on the cards. A member of the team began the group process by laying the card down on the table and explaining it's significance. Other members of the team listened to the explanation, and when they understood it's significance they used a prearranged non-verbal signal. When all affirmed, the next participant would lay another card next to the discarded card and begin again, changing or adjusting the significance of her card to make a connection with the card already discarded. This continued until all cards were discarded. Bridges between the cards created a collaborative product.

On Thursday, the participants listened to lectures by Dr. Lary May, of the University of Minnesota, that reviewed the political and social history of the period, firstly, through the life and events of the popular humorist Will Rodgers and, secondly, through the architecture of public buildings.

The morning studio workshop dealt with 1950s assemblage technique and used Louise Nevelson's sculpture as a starting point. As a reaction to the mythic Abstract Expressionist style, 50s art reflected a Beat sensibility - rebellious and cynical about the new materialism. It created art out of found materials and discarded consumer products.

The application of Mr. Walter's collaborative group activity that integrated the activities written by the teachers was the focus of the lesson plan workshop that afternoon. As each participant related his/her activities to another's, each combination brought out new areas of the curriculum for consideration and each activity was linked to every other activity. The final product was a map of activities spanning like a web the social and cultural issues and events of the 30s, 40s and 50s.

Friday's lecture by Dr. Mendelsohn on the history of science from 1930-1946 dealt with the effects of the change of funding sources (from the entrepreneur to big government contracts and, in the 50s, the development of well funded corporate research departments) on scientific research, morality, and ethics. The Bomb and all of the complex ramifications of its development and use were

Mr. Rishikof

Ms. Brenda Turner

Mr. Walter

Dr. Szekely

central to the lecture on science history from 1947 to 1960. This lecture, held in a gallery full of art produced during this turbulent period, made even clearer, the desperation and pessimism of the time through the apocalyptic landscapes and tortured figures of the drawings.

But within this difficult period there was a seed of abandon. As a final studio workshop, participants took part in a food "happening." A "happening" (circa 1960) is an event organized around a loose theme and a series of activities using untrained actors and audience participation. In this case, each participant was assigned a table arranged with a spectacular array of found objects and fruits, vegetables, dips, junk food, and to-do cards. A series of activities were required of the participants when they picked up the to-do cards including rearranging the food, or helping yourself to an hors-d'œuvre. Early 60s music and incense filled the air. While not strictly in the period studied, the "happening" concluded the hands-on workshops and suggested that after years of pessimism, a social and cultural release was inevitable, albeit for a short time in our history.

On Friday evening Mr. Bailin and Mr. Walter reviewed the progress of the workshop and linked the various lectures of the past week together.

Saturday contained several presentations and lectures: Brenda Turner, State Arts Specialist on the proposed visual arts frameworks; Mr. Rishikof on the tenuous and curious relationship between the government and art and the problematic role of modern government in society and in our personal lives; and Mr. Walter on an overview of Campbell's work in the 60s.

Dr. Szekely gave a workshop, a visual presentation of the art of teaching art and suggested strategies in bringing other academic disciplines into the art classroom. Play, making collections, using found objects, and dressing up all contribute to the creative ideas of children.

By the time Mr. Szekely's workshop ended, participants had completed 52 hours of work.

During the period covered in the Institute, the relationship between government, society, culture, science and technology, and individuals changed radically. As Mr. Rishikof noted, Americans are still dealing with the effects of the period's social and cultural experiments. Questions still remain: how intrusive should the government be in our lives, in health care, welfare, NEA support of the arts, civil rights, sexual harassment? We live with its ramifications in the obfuscation of our political and cultural discourse.

The teachers' condensed study of this one period demonstrated that social and cultural discourse, as well as curriculum, need not be separated into compartments. In fact, as the *New York Times* has inadvertently suggested, the components are intimately intertwined. The Institute demonstrated how to clarify that interrelationship and bring culture and society into the classroom through the arts.

The Web: Lesson Activities

Thomas Hart Benton, Lonesome Road, *n.d., lithograph, 10"x13", The Arkansas Arts Center Permanent Collection.*

The curriculum web expands from the student, his/her life, and experiences and his/her family through oral and photographic histories. It then moves to the landscape he/she inhabits–his/her home, streets, school, city–to the space that informs this landscape–the ideas of the time as reflected in the culture, the books, newspapers and magazines, and philosophies. Finally, it moves to the environment by which is meant the history of society, politics, and the threads that link past, present, and future together–the events that changed or challenged his/her society and culture.

During the Institute, teachers gave each of the decades from the 30s–50s an over-arching activity. For the 30s, it was to create a public mural (the "big parade"); for the 40s to create a monument to war, technology, or humanity (the beast inside); and for the 50s to create a television show (the pursuit of happiness). Each activity integrated the four main artistic themes that Dr. Dreishpoon identified in the art of the 40s and 50s (figure, landscape, space, and environment). The following summarizes high school appropriate projects.

1930s: The Big Parade

Research, design, and create a mural in a public building.

▲ Teachers introduce the WPA and the ideas of Holger Cahill, art project director, that government support of the arts would aid artists in establishing an active relationship between society and its culture, and would lead to the progress and renewal of both.

1) Compare the murals produced by artists living in rural areas which illustrated the particular activities and history of that locale with the murals of urban artists that were educational, universal, and epic in intent. Note the appropriateness of the mural's theme to the type of public building (development of medicine, law, air travel for hospitals, courthouses, and airports, respectively).

2) Identify some of the mythic or historic content of the murals (draw upon the idea of historical and cultural progression, achievement, and change suggested in Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, 1934).

3) Research the fashion of the period, the machines, and types of inventions, the look of the interior and exterior environments, and types of work and leisure depicted. Read selections from the literature (such as *Our Town*, Wilder or *Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck) and newspaper accounts of the period to get a feel of everyday life.

Valuable references in linking the disciplines, teachers and students should consult Bernard Grun, The Timetables of History, *Touchstone/ Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, and John Patrick Diggins*, The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace 1941-1961, *W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1989.*

4) Divide the students into groups to investigate local history through oral histories taken of family members and individuals who lived through that decade, complemented with interviews of local historians and civic leaders and thorough research in county records.

5) Complement your reading by listening to the music for clues to the period (Gershwin, Britten, Porter, Barber, Copeland), musicals and popular tunes ("Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?", "Stormy Weather", "Easter Parade", "Blue Moon", "It's DeLovely", "It Ain't Necessarily So", "Pennies From Heaven", "Whistle While You Work", "It's Nice Work If You Can Get It", "God Bless America", etc.).

6) Compare the depictions of life through the films of Temple, Garland (*The Wizard Of Oz*), Chaplin (*Modern Times, City Lights*), Hitchcock (*The 39 Steps, The Lady Vanishes*), Capra (*Mr. Deeds Goes To Town*), and others, with the murals, and discuss the Depression and the apparent contradiction between the intent of the murals (optimistic, forward looking, nationalistic) and other artistic versions and the reality of everyday life.

▲ Identify local public buildings built in the 30s such as libraries, schools, town halls, civic centers, etc., that might have used WPA artists for murals or other art projects.

1) Review perspective drawing and look at architectural drawings. For reference, study architectural history of the 30s and include landmarks such as Rockefeller Center, The Empire State Building (finished in 1931), and the architects, Wright (Taliesin West, AZ, and Johnson Wax Company building), Gropius & Breuer (Haggery House, MA), and Hood (Daily News Building). Examine local architectural monuments and architects.

2) Organize field trips to take wall measurements of the site, and create interior and exterior architectural drawings and other working plans of the space and environment around the building.

▲ Decide on the theme of the mural.

1) Collect a visual record of the period from old family photos and newspapers, prepare sketches, and collage elements that focus on the theme

2) Decide, as a team, the best project design (using Benton's mechanics of form organization) and finalize the drawings.

▲ Create the mural.

1) Scale the working drawings, prepare preparatory paintings, and create a maquette.

2) Seek approval for the project by presenting a written and oral proposal, itemizing the budget and theme, to the appropriate officials.

3) Create the work on-site or on paper or canvas to size.

4) Prepare a press release and handout explaining the work to the public when the mural is displayed on site.

1940s: The Beast Inside

Collaborate on a monument to celebrate or mourn a wartime event or express a universal theme about war.

Jackson Pollock, Untitled, *1939-40, pencil and pastel on brown paper, 6"x8.24", The Arkansas Arts Center Foundation Collection*

▲ Students investigate the war's impact on society and culture by creating visual responses to the events of the 1940s.

1) Document the war's progression in Europe and Asia through map making. Graph death, production, and other statistics.

2) Investigate the period by reading newspapers and eyewitness accounts, documenting oral histories, viewing popular movies (*The Best Years of Our Lives, Notorious, The Third Man*), listening to period music (*Oklahoma, Kiss Me, Kate, South Pacific*), and comparing the literature written during and after the war (Hemingway, O'Neill, Sinclair, Hersey, and Williams).

3) Compare and contrast examples of documentary realists, poster, iconoclastic, and abstract art of the period.

4) Create a journal reflecting on the significant events of the war and use the various artistic approaches to express those ideas.

▲ Link mythological themes to the period's artistic themes.

1) Review the main themes of abstract work of the 1940s (return to origins, human continuum, conflict, and dualistic pattern of human life and transformation) as noted by Polcari in AE, pp33-34.

2) Discuss the art historical importance of the Dada and Surrealist movements' anti-war stance reflected in the emphasis on the mythic, the irrational, and the unconscious on artists such as Pollock, Rothko, and Gorky.

3) Experiment with Surrealist techniques (such as Exquisite Cadaver, collage, rubbing, pouring, and automatic drawing and painting) that use the "unconscious", the irrational, and the accident to make art.

4) Read *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), by Wilder and introduce the work of Campbell– especially Campbell's analysis of the hero, the call to adventure, and the beast.

5) Research ancient myths that relate to destruction and reconstruction; study mythological movie and comic book beasts and heroes, and connect the concept of beast to depictions both in propaganda (specific) and in abstract work (universal).

6) Investigate the pre- and post-war attitudes about technology and science (especially the development of the Bomb) as it relates to the themes of abstract art.

▲ Discuss the hero's journey and the beast as it relates to society, technology, and culture, and then how it relates to the individual.

1) Create a mythical beast by visiting a zoo to make sketches of animals, using those images to form a mythical beast.

2) Select an event from the journal and change it into a illustrated sequential adventure (use Maus I & II by Art Speigelman as an example).

▲ Divide the class into teams to create a monument celebrating or mourning an event or war theme.

1) Investigate national war monuments, sculptures, and local

monuments as a reference point.

2) As a group, compile the all completed work, discuss the most effective images, create preparatory working drawings, and collaborate on a sculpture using paper maché, wood, or other 3-D materials.

3) Prepare a dedication.

1950s: The Pursuit of Happiness

The thematic and philosophical contrast between popular culture and the arts reaches its extremes during the 1950s. This rift is symptomatic of the contrast between burgeoning consumerism created out of a new sense of affluence and the alienation and social and political tensions created out of the cold war.

▲ Chart the growth of suburbia and graph the rise in productivity, consumer spending, leisure time, gross national product, population changes, and growth. Take note of the changes in government and business policies as the economy moves from wartime to peacetime.

1) Investigate the local and major political events of the 50s (include the effects on society of the Korean War, McCarthyism, and Civil Rights movement: Central High, Montgomery bus line boycott).

2) Investigate the technological advances (Einstein publishes *General Field Theory*, electric power produced from atomic energy, hydrogen bomb, oral polio vaccine, antihistamines, transatlantic cable telephone service, Sputnik, stereophonic recording, etc.) and how these advances affected everyday life.

3) Review the format and content of the sit-coms *(I Love Lucy, The Honeymooners, Father Knows Best, Leave It To Beaver, Burns and Allen Show, Dobie Gillis);* the westerns *(Gunsmoke, Wagon Train, Have Gun, Will Travel)*, and the game show *(What's My Line?)*. How are people depicted? What roles do they have? What kind of work do they do? What values do they portray? Investigate the way things look, the types of appliances and machines they use, the fashions, and design of cars, trains, and airplanes.

4) Review the social history of the period and determine what is missing in this television version. Read a selection from social science (Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*, Whyte's *The Organization Man*, Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior*), literature, and theater (Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* , Kerouac's *On The Road* , O'Neill's *Long Days Journey Into Night* or *Death of a Salesman)* for clues.

5) Compare the themes, issues, and concerns of the musicals of the time *(West Side Story, My Fair Lady, The Sound of Music)* and the music highlighted by American Bandstand (include the work of Elvis Presley and others) with the films of the time *(Street Car Named Desire, Strangers on a Train, Twelve Angry Men, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, High Noon,*

Adolph Gottlieb, Pictograph, *1948, gouache and crayon on paper, The Arkansas Arts Center Foundation Collection.*

For more information on the Fort Smith project, contact Lynn Smith, Cindy Greer, Rosemary Meyers, and Kathy Smith at Northside High School, 2301 North B Street, Fort Smith, AR, 72901 or call 201-783-1171

The Seven Year Itch, From Here To Eternity, On the Waterfront, Rear Window).

▲ Look at how leisure time is used.

1) Review and analyze the style, the graphics and written content of advertisements and compare the emphasis to the sit-coms.

2) Discuss how the intent of advertisements and mass media informs work and leisure time (review the fads: the barbecue, 3-D movie glasses, hoola hoops, etc.).

3) From this compilation of information, students determine the content of their show and the show's sponsor and commercials, and outline the structure and format of the emulated 50s show.

4) Invite a television/ drama writer or producer to participate as a resource and create a storyboard/script of the show and the advertisements, design and build the set, and select the music.

5) Select and script a news event that will break into the show that contrasts with the theme and focus of the program.

6) Cast and rehearse the actors and video-tape the program.

The Fort Smith team developed a succinct two weeks of interdisciplinary instruction that tied together studies of 50s plays and playwrights, the historical significance of technology, 50s artists and styles to local history, politics and social perception. Along with writing and research assignments, collages, computer projects, posters, book jacket designs, and oral presentations, the project culminated in a 50s day and included a Jeopardy game, dance lessons, hoola hoop contest, dress up contest, and Bull's Eye gum throwing contest. Since the event was popular with the students, a 60s program is being developed.

Recommendations: Envisioning A Future

As evidenced in the evaluation forms returned to the Museum School, the Institute was successful in exploring issues in American culture and society from 1930-60, discovering interdisciplinary possibilities using art as a focus, and producing practical lessons for classrooms. The Fort Smith team reported that at the end of their two-week study of the 50s with over 600 students, a higher percentage of students completed assignments; students had asked more questions and shared more of the information they had researched; and more students attended classes more regularly.

In addition to the success in the classroom, a number of overall observations can be made upon review of the Institute program and results:

- The museum served to enhance the workshops by coordinating museum resources to provide intensive learning experiences to teachers.
- Those experiences could be brought into the classroom.
- Museum exhibitions as primary sources can be used to develop innovative classroom lessons which deal with complex and difficult material throughout the curriculum.

On the other hand, a number of problems did come up that suggest there is still much that needs to be addressed in order that full advantage be taken of collaborations between museums and schools. Problems teachers faced included:

- There was only one participant for many schools or the academic composition of team members was not varied enough.
- There was reticence on the part of some of the non-art teachers to change already planned or anticipated curriculum to take advantage of the art focus.
- There was a lack of support for the art teacher in developing a comprehensive lesson plan.
- Schools were not prepared for the scheduling and resource flexibility required to implement the plans.

These problems are solvable. However, the activities section of this report suggests that the art classroom takes on additional tasks when it becomes a center for interdisciplinary work.

Preparatory to adding new tasks, what is the current task of art education? In an effort to justify art in the classroom, art teachers have emphasized the acquisition of skills through the output of products. Teachers use reproductions and illustrations to motivate students while effectively removing the tactile and

the issue of scale from consideration. Teachers remove the reasons why artists create as well (to participate in a visual dialogue).

Many students have lost the value in making art by turning art production into convenient packages (stating the problem or motivation, issuing materials, demonstrating techniques, supporting students in solving problems, and finally assessing the finished product, and beginning again) that create a kind of mathematical problem that can be assessed and evaluated.

Forgetting that the art teacher's main focus is not producing artists, art education loses a chance to engage the student in a meaningful dialogue. How can art objects have meaning if the materials don't? Art teachers must assert the dialogue over the process or product from object and skill oriented to dialogue. If art making is mute, how can it connect the artist/student with other students, teachers, and history? The purpose of this method is not to produce artists but to develop visual acuity, understanding, and appreciation. Motivation must stem from the students as a result of their work. Otherwise art education will become increasingly less relevant to the school curricula and to the students.

But this approach is limited and assumes that a dialogue can be developed in the isolation of the classroom. Teachers know that their student population is changing, becoming more multicultural with higher percentages of African-Americans, Philippine, Hispanic, Indian, and Native American. Instead of looking at the process after the art is made, art teachers need to look at the process from the beginning.

What assumptions do art teachers bring into the classroom? Do art classes, far from being a safe place for students to express themselves, inhibit dialogue? It is apparent that there is something extremely problematic with art education's ap-

proach to art practice and history, considering the increasing cultural diversity of our communities, let alone trying to make the art classroom a center for interdisciplinary learning.

How is the dialogue problematic? Here is a partial list of assumptions that affect the discourse, which art teachers must address:

1) *Co-opting is understanding.* There is an assumption that if you engage students in a certain activity–say mask making–and acquaint them with various masks or draw upon an artifact (say, a Kachina doll), that the student understands the culture or the intent of the artifact.

2) *A reference to one is a reference to all.* Following the above, this assumption permits one project to stand in for the complexity of a rich culture or society. For instance, a mask making project will suffice for African art, or a batik project for Balinese culture.

3) *Technique equates experience and style evokes emotion.* Short brush strokes of primary colors quickly placed on a canvas and mixed optically will evoke a sunny day out in the park; load a brush with paint and throw it across the surface of the canvas and get a sense of speed and abandon.

4) *Beyond the cartography of the formal is a warning: "Here there are monsters."* Formalism creates the illusion of universality by extracting context and even content from a work of art or artifact. It neutralizes it and relies on an arbitrary and pseudo-logical language to reduce the object to a minimum. Formalism produces inane lessons on light and dark, line and color. Formalism hides the fact that behind the art theory lies tradition, religion, politics, or even a history (in fact, formalism changes these elements into descriptions of art) and this is where the monsters lie.

5) *"We're not in Kansas anymore."* The prime example is the portrait class where the purpose is to draw your buddy by drawing an oval, then halving it, etc. In fact, in most school situations you can't help but set out very specific procedures. But the materials and supplies you choose define the parameters of the execution and most often, nothing gets through such parameters.

6) *The tower of Babel, or "I am a guest at someone else's banquet."* Art history presents us with a linear and unified version of artistic progress. It is a progression that is western oriented and makes distinctions between tradition and evolving cultures, artifact and fine arts. There is a point at which the language or progression fails and we begin to ask whose culture, experience, histories, knowledge, and arts are represented in this history? What assumptions are being made that influence our viewing? History flows only one way. It sticks in our vision that way too. Confronted with an African mask and a Picasso, our western perception is that the African mask is a sub-text to Picasso's

work not the other way around.

7) *Confusing art and culture: can't tell the forest from the trees.* Considering the achievements of the great masters from the past a kind of closure occurs through art works. Closure in the world view and in the personal view. For instance, Michelangelo's Last Judgement fresco summarizes his society, culture, and values within the confides of the Sistine Chapel wall. Twentieth century art is different. The syntax of modern life doesn't lend itself to hierarchical structures, to summations or closure. One could say it doesn't lend itself to any structure, except maybe in the modern living room (consider the complexity of aural, visual, and literary material there). Having super-glued meaning out of the miscellany of life, the modern artist posits art as a Rorschach text that reflects back not universal truths but personal ones. This explains the plethora of found objects in modern art and why artists have continually stretched the context of methodology by throwing away the brushes, forgetting the easels, attacking the surface with real texture and using whatever is at hand, including the land, to communicate freshly in a way that makes sense for this age. This aggressive dialogue with the environment we live in through art constitutes the truly unique part of current artistic practice. It is really an excavation of what is the modern period and it links the artifact with fine art.

But all of art teacher's lessons, all of their studies, and goals that teachers set for their students hold up Renaissance and Baroque masters (such as Carravagio) as models and mistake the products of artists as culture. And while artists explored performance, new materials, and other cultures and began blurring the distinction between artifact and art. Art in the classroom emphasized the acquisition of skills through the output of products and students studied a myopic history and learned an inadequate language.

Concept adapted from James Clifford, "Museums in the Borderlands", Different Voices, a publication of the proceedings, Marcia Tucker, Project Director, Association of Art Museum Directors, 1992.

The Borderland

The art class can be a place of interdisciplinary enrichment and cross fertilization rather than of cultural barriers. First, art teachers must address and understand whose culture, experiences, histories, knowledge, and arts are represented, not to do away with them but to find ourselves. Other teachers in other academic disciplines can be and must be collaborators in this effect. Second, art teachers must provide a safe place where students' lived experiences can be powerful motivational devices and can serve as a base in which to explore others. This "borderland" within the school becomes a place of encounter and passage where students are travellers with meaningful ties elsewhere - with their families, heritage, environment and whose purpose in the class is to:

- Take part in a visual dialogue with peers, art, and environment.
- Develop a visual acuity - to be able to discern the meaning of visual material–how it manipulates, the ideology it promotes, what it shows, and to what it is blind.
- Draw upon other academic fields to provide a language and context for further investigations.

The art class is then transformed from a classroom into a borderland.

Students take their cultures into the borderland. They take their memories, thoughts, traditions, and life experiences as well. The teacher enhances and expands upon those experiences by using them as a catalyst to ignite the products.

What does this borderland look like? Open spaces bounded by materials, supplies, resource materials such as all types of books, videos, tapes, multi-media computers linked to networks, laser printers, printing presses, easels, darkroom, televisions, VCRs, radios, compact disk players, musical instruments, cameras, video equipment, telecommunication equipment, an exhibition and performance space, a works-in-progress space, and a lounge area with current magazines (art and graphic, history, geographic, news, gossip, etc.). An enriched environment in competition with the students' real world confronts them with options, requires of them decision making, and gives them the freedom to collaborate or to explore and create independently. It permits them to work with and manipulate the complex aural and visual sensorium with which they are confronted each day and in which they are required to process, make decisions about, and act upon.

Art teachers have had to deal with the effects of other disciplines' failed approaches to motivation and learning. If students don't take risks, don't have interest, don't experiment, it is not because they are not interested in expressing themselves. They express themselves all the time. In fact, up until age 8, students love to paint, make sculptures, and explore materials. Then something happens to them. Save for the art teacher's

own problematic dialogue, art programs have been affected by other disciplines. Classroom emphasis, products and procedures stifle expression. Hence there is a need to create a borderland within the school.

Art teachers need to draw upon their experiences as artists, to facilitate visual dialogue, and develop visual acuity or literacy and draw upon current artistic practices that see no boundaries for creating or learning. Their role is to link the artistic with the lived, the expressive with the material, the diversity of culture with the diversity of art making, and to facilitate the creative manipulation of materials.

But just creating this environment is not enough. Having carved this borderland out from the school, having asked students not to leave their culture, their traditions, their experiences at the crossings, we must accept the change in the role of the student. Students are not subordinate to the knowledge teachers impart to them. The fact is they don't want to be. Students progress through learning naturally and retain the love of learning and experiencing if given the right environment. Our doubts that students making decisions about material, determining the focus and direction of their work and assisting fellow students, and taking a role in their education, are possible is the result of the structure of the schools. Ironically, once out of the school environment, students are at-risk of making other decisions that effect their environment and other students and take a role in their environmental education (and we aren't off the hook–witness the constant social, value imparting, and ethical roles pushed off onto schools and classroom teachers). Still, teachers cling to role playing. Teachers teach, students learn.

When an art teacher goes into her studio he/she creates a borderland. He/she brings into this safe place lived experiences and takes the time to consider what to work on, selects the materials best suited to expressing that work, seeks out inspiration and ideas, and permits the work to evolve as a natural result of the process. The borderland must permit the individual student to progress educationally and creatively as a natural result of his/her process.

For students, the turmoil of an unsettling daily life, and the racism and violence they experience, creating a borderland within the school is critical. And the art teacher's role is more complex and critical to education than many understand.

Art is not passive. Art can change a situation by changing the images men and women have of themselves and of their situations. Art teachers need to train people to understand how the sensorium manipulates as well as is manipulated. How it reveals and blinds us to our nature and our capacities. Until art teachers impart to our students an understanding of the sensorium, until a truly open visual dialogue is started, images of culture, history, and self will forever be myopic. The art class

as borderland permits students to give visual form to ideas emanating from life experience and value systems across time, cultures, societies, and ethnic groups and to look critically at the visual manifestations of our culture.

Having tried to insulate the classrooms from the world, art teachers must learn from our modern artists and craftspeople throughout the world, from the surrealists who supper-glued meaning out of the hodgepodge of daily life, from the conceptualists who suggest that concept made visual has weight, from performance artists who suggest that the artist manipulating his environmental can bring new significance to pedestrian movements, from environmental artist who took art off the walls and into the world, from the artist representing other cultures who break down the distinction between artifact and fine art, how to work with the cultural, intellectual, and experiential landscape.

Re-visioning the future of the art classroom also relies on museums, libraries, public records, and private collections, and recollections in the educational process. It is there that the student can touch or interact with primary sources and can relate the experience to the subject matter. He/she can immerse himself/herself in the work. As a result, art and artifact takes a center role in the discourse and becomes a vital partner in the learning experience. It is in this moment of viewing, of handling, of experiencing that barriers are broken and the educational process is started. It is an educational process where a collaborative effort with other disciplines inspire artistic investigations, and artist process inspires investigations into history, math, social studies, or literature.

To change one's product, change the method. Until art teachers change their method of teaching they will forever condemn their students to the same products. Products that become increasingly less relevant to the student and to the environment they inhabit.

The Institute was conceived as the first step in changing the role of the arts in the learning process and re-invigorating the classroom.

Resources

Video-Tapes

All lectures and some of the studio workshops were videotaped. These tapes are available for teacher use in preparing lessons. They are not for classroom use. You may call the Museum School Registrar (501-372-4000) to obtain a lending copy.

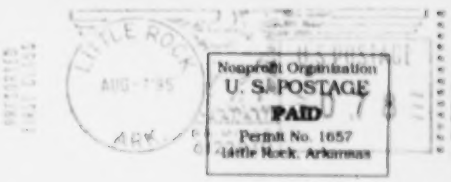
- Tapes 1 & 2: Exhibition walk through and Visual Artists of the 1940s and 50s with Dr. Dreishpoon.
- Tape 3: Arkansas History 1930-1960 with Dr. Williams.
- Tapes 4 & 5: Artistic Practice During the Depression & War Years and Martha Graham: Cultural & Historical Themes of an Era with Dr. Polcari.
- Tapes 6 & 7: Heroic Visions East & West parts 1 & 2, with Mr. Walter.
- Tapes 8 & 9: Will Rodgers: the Political & Social History of the 1930-1946 and Political and Social History of the 1946-1960 with Dr. May.
- Tapes 10 & 11: Scientific History parts 1 & 2 with Dr. Mendelsohn.
- Tape 12: The Art of Politics: Politics of Art with Mr. Rishokof.
- Tape 13: Joseph Campbell and Signs, symbols and narrative workshop highlights with Mr. Walter.
- Tape 14: The Art of Teaching Art with Dr. Szekely.
- Tape 15: Excerpts from the Walter and assemblage hands-on workshops.

Recommended Texts

The following books and articles and were recommended texts for the Institute which each participant received.

- John M. Akey and Judith C. Gilbert, The Essentials Approach: An Integrated Curriculum Model for Rethinking the Curriculum of the Future *(for copies write to Dr. Akey, 2410 Warwick Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80909).*
- Design Team, "Fine Arts Curriculum Framework For The Visual Arts", Brenda Turner, Arts Specialist, Arkansas Department of Education *(call Ms. Turner for copy at 501-682-4558).*
- Douglas Dreishpoon, *Between Transcendence and Brutality: American Sculptural Drawings from the 1940s and 1950s,* exhibition catalogue, Tampa Museum of Art, 1994.
- Joseph Campbell, *Myths To Live By*, Arkana/Penguin Books, New York, 1993.
- Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970,* Penguin Books, New York, 1990.
- Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991.
- George Szekely, "Visual Arts Areas Of Study: Integration With Other Subjects", in *Visual Arts Teacher Resource Handbook: a Practical Guide For Teaching K-12 Visual Arts*, John Michael, Editor. Kraus International Publications, Millwood, NY, 1993.

The Arkansas Arts Center Museum School
Art & Interdisciplinary Studies Institute
MacArthur Park • 9th & Commerce
P.O. Box 2137
Little Rock, AR 72203-2137



E

ERIC ART
2805 East Tenth Street
Suite 120
Indiana University
Bloomington, INDIANA
47408-2698

The Institute program was generously funded by a matching grant from the Jonsson Foundation, Dallas, Texas.